

# CRESTHAVEN STAMP CLUB NEWSLETTER

West Palm Beach, Florida

*The Palm Beaches Oldest & Friendliest Stamp Club*

**December 2023**

This month we celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Boston Tea Party. Colonists from the "Sons of Liberty" British resistance group, disguised as Mohawk Indians, boarded three British tea ships and dumped 342 chests of tea into Boston harbor on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1773 - to protest taxation tyranny. Other December observances include the start of Hanukkah and Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day - both on the 7<sup>th</sup>; National Christmas Tree Day on the 8<sup>th</sup>; Winter Solstice on the 21<sup>st</sup>; Christmas on the 25<sup>th</sup>; and, Kwanzaa begins on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Our 2023 season will end with mixed emotions. On the positive side, we have defied stamp collecting club trends by increasing membership and we were recognized nationally for both our newsletter and website (see announcements). On the downside, however, it appears that our club will need a new location for meetings and shows. Negotiations with the Barkley Master Association have been unsuccessful. Please check our club website for a new meeting venue after January 1, 2024.

**Merry Christmas,**  
*Michael Swope*

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**Chapter Affiliate #923**  
**Membership Affiliate #81338**

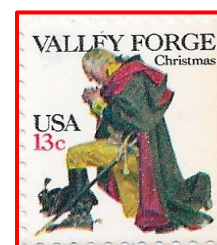
Meetings: Barkley Clubhouse  
1:00 p.m. – 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays  
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# The Queen's Staircase

## Preserved on Bahamian Postage Stamps

Dan Maddalino



*The Queens Staircase*

The first adhesive postage stamps issued by the British administered Bahama Islands (1859) bore various illustrations of Queen Victoria's portrait. This changed in 1901 with the bicolored stamps depicting the Queen's Staircase found in its capital Nassau (see Scott #33). The illustration would eventually appear on 15 stamps issued between 1901 and 1912 under British Colonial Administration. They were also overprinted for charity, war tax, special delivery, and semi-postal purposes.

The Queen's Staircase was a narrow set of 66 stairsteps carved into the limestone rock of a cliff overlooking Nassau. It was carved by hand using an estimated 300 slaves from 1793 through 1794, on order of the Colonial Governor, Lord Dunmore. The Bahamian capital sits at the base of the cliff on Bennett's Hill, and Fort Fincastle stood atop Bennett's Hill facing the sea. A closer look at the stamp shows the steep yet majestic rise of the "66 Steps" as it was called until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

It was at that time the 66 Steps were renamed in memorial to Queen Victoria who reigned from 1837 until her death in 1901.

The purpose for this structure has been clouded in lore, legend, and fantasy. The true reason for the construction is buried in 18<sup>th</sup> century Colonial Orders (records). Lord Dunmore wanted an escape route to Fort Fincastle for he and his family to quickly reach safety should Nassau fall under attack from the French or the Spanish navies.



*Bahamas Scott #33*



A feared attack never occurred, and the 66 Steps became a short-cut between downtown Nassau and back-island neighborhoods.

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the Fort and Queen's Staircase had fallen to disrepair and neighborhoods surrounding them became high crime areas.

Recognizing their tourist value, in 2012, Nassau began a two-year replacement (not restoration) of these sites. The ruins of Fort Fincastle have been almost completely replaced by a tourist inspired "fort", complete with cartoonish canons on its roof.



The original Queen's Staircase has been destroyed and replaced with a red-brick stairway, aluminum handrails, and trickling water effects descending like two falls along the stairs. Tacky and sad. However, the original majestic beauty and iconic image are well preserved on the Bahamian Queen's Staircase stamps.

*Primary sources:*

[uncommoncaribbean.com/bahamas/queensstaircase-Nassau-bahamas](http://uncommoncaribbean.com/bahamas/queensstaircase-Nassau-bahamas)

[bahamas.com/plan-your-trip/things-to-do/the-queens-staircase](http://bahamas.com/plan-your-trip/things-to-do/the-queens-staircase)

[shouldbecruising.com/2021/06/30/queens-staircase-nassau](http://shouldbecruising.com/2021/06/30/queens-staircase-nassau)

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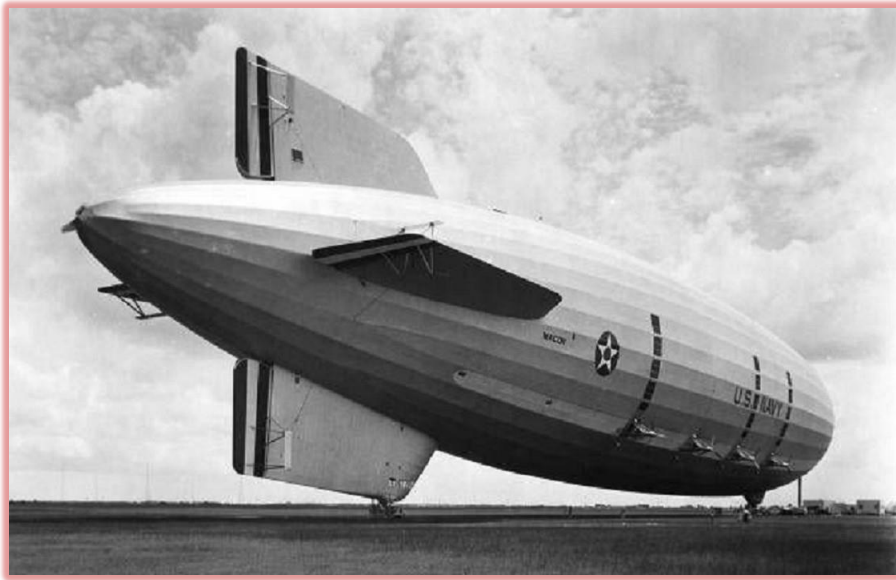


**On November 7, 2023, The American Philatelic Society announced their awards in the annual Star Route "Newsletter" competition.**

**Congratulations to the Cresthaven Stamp Club and its dedicated authors in receiving the prestigious "Large Vermeil" award.**

# USS Macon at Guantanamo Bay

Juan L. Riera



The *USS Macon* (ZRS-5) was a rigid airship, built and operated by the United States Navy for the purpose of scouting and serving as a flying aircraft carrier. It could carry five single-seat, Curtiss F9C, Sparrowhawk airplanes for scouting or five, two-seat, Fleet N2Y-1 airplanes for training purposes. Along with her sister-ship *Akron*, the *Macon* was helium filled. By contrast, German rigid airships *Hindenburg* and *Graf Zeppelin II* were hydrogen filled and slightly larger. The *Macon* was in service from June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1933, until her crash off of Big Sur, California, on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1935.

In April and May, 1934, the *Macon* participated in fleet maneuvers in the Caribbean, and was temporarily stationed at Opa-Locka, Florida. Here, maintenance was performed following its 55-hour flight from Moffett Field, California, because the *Macon* sustained damage while crossing over very high mountain peaks. From 1932 until 1959, the United States leased the western half of Opa-Locka airport and had erected a dirigible mooring mast. The *USS Akron* also stopped at Opa-Locka on both legs of its 1933 trip to the Panama Canal Zone. The airport was one of the stops on the triangular “Germany-Brazil-United States-Germany” route of the *Graff Zeppelin*. And, Amelia Earhart launched her second attempt to circumnavigate the globe from this same airport in 1937.

So, what is the difference between an “airship”, a “dirigible” and a “blimp”? An airship is any powered, steerable aircraft that it is inflated with a gas that is lighter than air. “Airship” and “dirigible” are synonyms; a dirigible is also a lighter-than-air craft that is powered and steerable, as opposed to free floating like a balloon. A blimp is a powered, steerable, lighter-than-air vehicle whose shape is maintained by the pressure of the gases within its envelope. A blimp has no rigid internal structure: If a blimp deflates, it loses its shape.





Featured here is a Miami Philatelic Society airmail cacheted cover of the *USS Macon* airship, departing for the Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Cuba, to take part in United States Naval maneuvers. The cachet is autographed by its designer, John B. Williams. Guantanamo Bay also had a dirigible mooring mast and facilities available that were utilized throughout World War II.

The cover is franked with the black, 7¢ Washington Bicentennial issue, Scott #712 and green, 1¢ Century of Progress issue "Restoration of Fort Dearborn", Scott #728, postage stamps. The cancellation was aboard the *USS Tillman* (DD-135) that participated in the fleet maneuvers while in Miami. It was cancelled May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1934 at 9am. The *Tillman* was a Wickes Class destroyer that transferred to the British Navy as part of World War II's, Lend-Lease agreement. In December 1940, the *Tillman* became *HMS Wells* (195).

On November 7, 2023, The American Philatelic Society announced their awards in the annual Star Route "Website" competition.

Congratulations to the Cresthaven Stamp Club and its contributors in receiving the prestigious "Vermeil" award.



# Confederates & Zeppelins

Michael Rogers



C13

C14

C15

Most people know me as a China specialist, but back in 1978 when I first opened Winter Park Stamp Shop, I carried a fine stock of Zeppelin and Airpost flight covers. Way before the internet, I released the old-fashioned pricelists printed on paper carrying common to elusive material.

And it was for that very reason, the renowned Confederate philatelic dealer, Gordon McHenry, sought me out to complete a set of U.S. Graf Zeppelin flight covers. He wanted a 65¢ (Scott C13) to match the April 19, 1930 date on the \$1.30 (C14) and \$2.60 (C15) Zeppelins that he already possessed.

Right off, I told Gordon his flights were first day covers and I did not have a 65¢ in stock. But Gordon was insistent that his covers were not FDC's and that it was only me trying to enhance the value of his covers. He turned the tables, saying that if I was so sure of myself, I ought to buy them. His price was \$1200. The C14 was a sound stamp on a real dirty and wrinkled cover. The C15 however, was a gem in all respects – a slam dunk beauty! \$1200 was too much money for regular flight covers, but a bargain for the first day covers I knew them to be. I paid Gordon and thought that was the end to it.

When Gordon returned to his home, he must have reached for a catalogue because he phoned me the next day, exclaiming "You took advantage of me!" I'm sure he did not appreciate my chuckling on the phone when I reminded him that I accepted the price he set, and before that I said several times he had better material than he thought he had. We mended fences later.

Gordon was a man of integrity, a gentle and witty spirit, and a resounding authority of Confederate philately.

Ref:

Reprinted in part from "The American Stamp Dealer & Collector", February, 2013

# Pumpkinseed Sunfish

Pat Hensley



The 45¢ multicolored Pumpkinseed Sunfish stamp (Scott #2481) was issued on December 2, 1992, at the National Aquarium in Washington DC. It is part of the Flora and Fauna Series and was distributed in panes of one hundred (ten down and ten across). The artwork was made by Michael Matherly who also created the 1¢ American Kestrel and the 3¢ Bluebird stamps.

When I saw this stamp, I thought it was beautiful. The colors immediately caught my eye and I'm not a big fish lover. Not only did the colors interest me, but its name even intrigued me and I had to learn more about this fish.

The Pumpkinseed fish is a freshwater fish native to northeastern North America. It can be found from New Brunswick to South Carolina. They reach a maximum length of sixteen inches but are usually found at six to eight inches and weigh less than a pound. Its name reflects its shape, which resembles a pumpkinseed. The orange, green, yellow, or blue speckles can be on its olive back and sides while its belly and breast can be yellow to orange. It has sharp spines so you have to be careful when handling it.

Pumpkinseed sunfish live in warm, calm lakes, ponds, and pools of creeks and small rivers. They like lots of vegetation to hide and stay near shallow and protected areas. They feed at all levels from the surface to the bottom in daylight, but mainly eat in the afternoon. They like to travel in schools that might include bluegills and other sunfish. At night, they rest near the bottom of the water or in protected areas in rocks or near logs.

Pumpkinseed Sunfish eat insects, mosquito larvae, small mollusks, snails, other crustaceans, smaller pumpkinseed sunfish, minnows, and worms. Their predators can include largemouth bass, pike, perch, cormorants and herons, and fishermen.

I've never seen one in the wild but you can bet that I'll be looking for one now.

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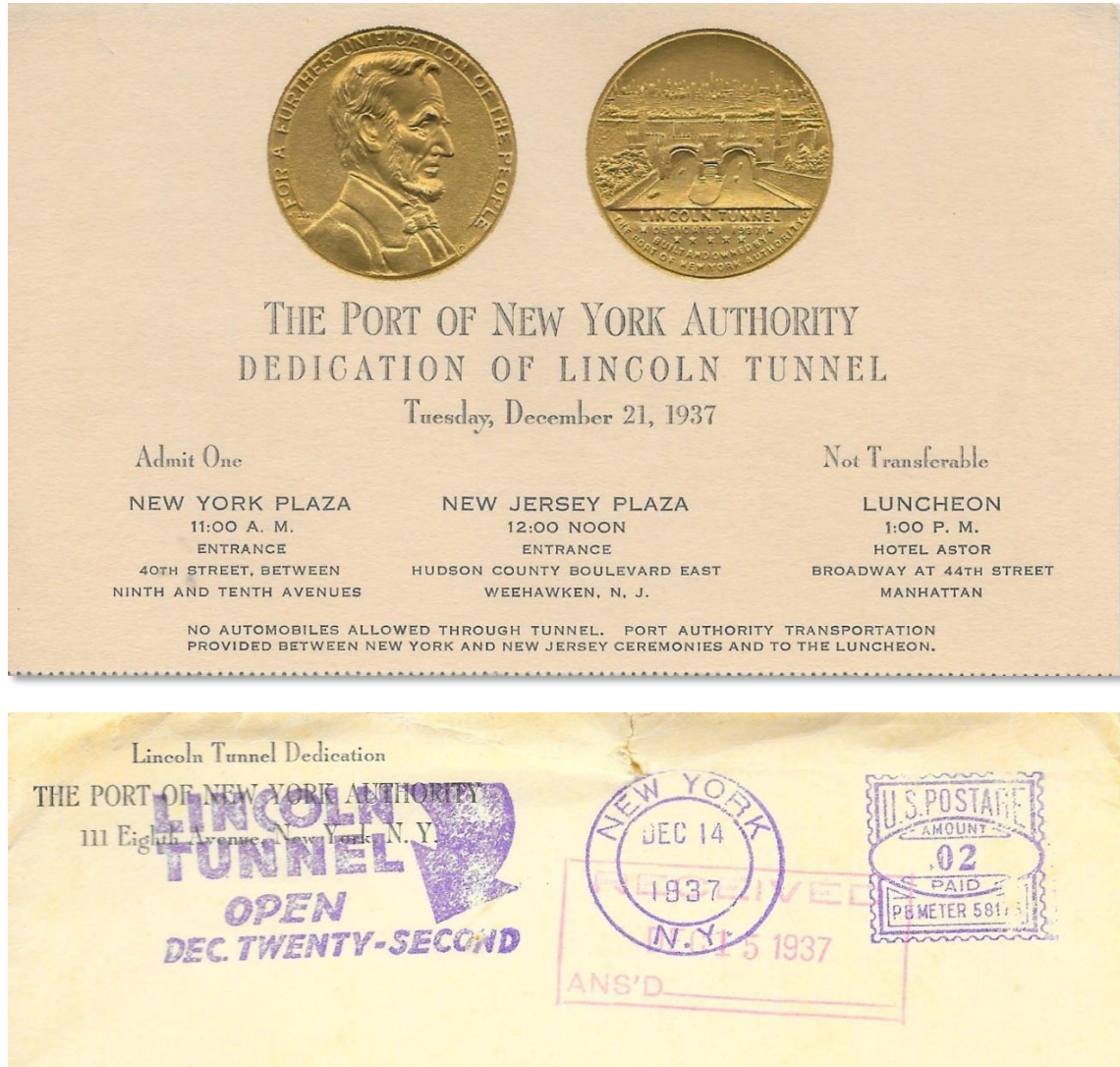
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# Lincoln Tunnel

Michael Swope



Featured above is an admission ticket to the December 21, 1937, dedication ceremony prior to opening of New York Port Authority's Lincoln Tunnel and, the envelope it was mailed in. Ceremonies were scheduled for both ends of the tunnel: Mid-Town Manhattan's 40<sup>th</sup> Street entrance and New Jersey's Weehawken entrance.

The cover was franked by a Pitney-Bowes, model FV6, postage meter, with 2¢ postage paid; a December 14, 1937, cancellation; and, "Lincoln Tunnel Open Dec. Twenty-Second" graphics. The cover also bears a December 15, 1937, "received" rubber stamp in violet.

The 1.5-mile-long tunnel under the Hudson River was first proposed in 1920, but construction did not begin until 1934. Initially completed in 1937, the tunnel has undergone several upgrades including addition of parallel tubes last completed in 1957.

Ref: Cover from author's collection  
[www.panynj.gov](http://www.panynj.gov)



# A Christmas Card

